

## **EDITORIAL: 'In the dust'**

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Democrats campaigned and won control of Congress last year on their withering criticism of President Bush and "do-nothing" Republican lawmakers. They vowed to change the culture of Washington and bring a renewed work ethic to the Capitol.

After a few months in the majority, Democrats are mighty pleased with themselves. Speaker Nancy Pelosi said this Congress has left its predecessor "in the dust." Her charges have boasted of legislation to increase the minimum wage and establish a timetable for a withdrawal of troops from Iraq.

Meanwhile, their efforts to undermine the Bush administration have not ceased. News conference sound bites are the light stuff. Democrats are now using committee hearings to extract pounds of flesh, and they're traveling abroad to torpedo the State Department's foreign policy.

It's a curious strategy considering Democrats need President Bush's signature to turn their initiatives into law. In fact, the numbers show the only thing that's "in the dust" is the Democrats' agenda itself.

"Democrats have successfully passed 16 bills into law, 10 of which name a federal building, post office, courthouse or national recreation area," said Rep. Patrick McHenry, R-N.C. "Zero make any legislative impact on fighting the war against Islamic extremists, balancing the federal budget, creating jobs, cutting pork-barrel spending or saving Social Security."

Many lawmakers on both sides of the aisle like to judge the performance of an elected body based on the number of laws its members create. Such a formula doesn't evaluate whether the new laws bring new forms of regulation, intrusion and taxation upon Americans.

It's a good thing that this Democratic Congress hasn't been able to force any of its most dangerous ideas into federal statute. And as long as the party's leaders insist on demonizing the White House, their legacy will be as undistinguished as the big-spending Republicans who came before them.